

[From Winter 1998-1999]

Fall Waterfowl Migration

An unseasonably dry fall has taken its toll on waterfowl numbers this year. Precipitation for the year is six inches below last year's level leaving the refuge's freshwater impoundments dry during the annual fall migration.

The impoundments usually provide a rest haven to over 50,000 ducks and geese during their fall migration. This year's numbers have decreased 66% to a mere 15,100 birds. Species diversity has also suffered, decreasing from 18 species in November of 1997 to only 13 species this year.

Hopefully the month of December will bring enough precipitation to end this drought and provide a more appealing stopover for migrating waterfowl.